



## THE SOCIAL AND CULTURAL IMPORTANCE OF CAMEL HUSBANDRY IN GOLESTAN PROVINCE

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### Abstract

Camel husbandry has been a common practice in the north of Golestan province and camel used to be one of the main farm animals of Torkmen people. However, at present, camel husbandry is limited due to certain increasing problems. Not only economic and ecological factors but also social and cultural factors have made camel husbandry an important issue. Camel is the second important animal after horse among Torkmen people, to the extent that one of the Turkmen tribes is named *Davaji or Deyeji* means a person who raises camels. Also in old times, in Torkmen-Sahra, camel litters were used in wedding ceremonies. Nowadays, still in some wedding ceremonies the litters are used as cultural and symbolic factors. In this area based on the age, gender and cross of one and two humped camels, certain names and expressions are used which signify the cultural importance of the camel husbandry. Also, a camel's picture is one of the common designs on carpets, rugs and needle-works. Torkmen people respect camels a lot and they write about it in their proverbs. For example; *Duye maling, Donya maling* means if you have a camel you will have the world. Also, *hatarde ner bolsa, youk yerde ghalmaz* means if there is a male camel in the line of the caravan, no load will be left behind. Also, *Duye Chali, derde derman* means camel's fermented milk (Chal) is the medicine for pains.

**Key Words:** Torkmen one-humped camel, Torkmen culture.

### Introduction

Camel is an animal which truly exists in deserts as a god's gift, because this animal has made itself adapted (from the anatomical, physiological, ecological and pathological point of view) to Semi-arid and arid climates perfectly, and as a result camels have gained a high level of importance in arid and Semi-arid regions (Nazer Adl, 1988).

Camel husbandry has been one of the most common and thriving branches of animal breeding in Iran for a long time. Camels were subjected to breeding for several purposes and their usage was mostly in transportation, agriculture and husbandry, traveling and free-riding, and today its usage is mainly in economic operations and utilization of its products (Khatemi 1988). However in recent years the entire specie of this profitable animal is in danger of extinction, because of various problems coupled by lack of support for camel husbandry in Iran (Googlani, 1997).



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### Importance of camel husbandry in Golestan province

Not a long time ago, the northern part of Golestan province was the centre of camel husbandry. The economic importance of camel's utilization in transportation, husbandry, agriculture and providing the major portion of requirements such as meat, milk, fluff and hair have made Camel the main livestock for Turkmen people. Unfortunately because of some growing problems camel breeding and maintenance has faced limitations. The facts and figures of investigations estimate the number of camels of this region between 2200 and 3500 (Googlani, 1997).

Table 1, local names of different ages and genders of camel in Turkmen-Sahra.

Local name (Turkmen)	Age and gender of the Camel
Dieh or Duieh	Camel (General)
Cosheck	Birth – 6 months old
Toriem	6 months – one year old
Awshigh	One – two year old
Kesher	2 – 3 year old male
Dwleaj or Ghyaligh	2 – 3 year old female
Arvaneh or Inan	Mature female one humped camel
Erceck	Mature male one humped camel
Boghreh	Mature male two humped camel
Iner (Boghreh x Arvaneh)	Hybrid mature male (cross female one humped camel and male two humped camel)
Maya (Boghreh x Arvaneh)	Hybrid mature female (cross female one humped camel and male two humped camel)
Cadery (Iner x Arvaneh)	Mature female (cross female one humped camel and hybrid mature male)
Gophared (Iner x Arvaneh)	Mature male (cross female one humped camel and hybrid mature male)

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### Socio-cultural significance of camel husbandry in Golestan province

In this region camel husbandry has a significant socio-cultural importance. In spite of ecological and economic elements, camel is also the second animal after horse that Turkmen people have a special interest to breed. The most important points of socio-cultural significance of camel husbandry in this area are as follows:

1. One of the most important Turkmen tribes is titled as Davaji or Diye-ji, which is dedicated to people who used to breed camels (Ghazi, 1998 and Tengli, 1986).
2. In this area there are different names and expressions used for manifold ages and genders of camels, which determines the significance of camel husbandry in Turkmen-Sahra. The most substantial ones are mentioned in table 1 (Tengli, 1986).
3. Camel is a respected animal among Turkmen's, and the goodness of camels is always mentioned in their proverbs and literary texts. Among their most significant instances are camels (Ghazi, 1998):  
 " Duieh Maling, Dunya Maling" it means that if you own a camel then you own the world.  
 " hatarda nar boolse, yok yarde ghalalmaz" it means if there is a male camel in the row of the caravan, no load will be left.  
 "Duieh chali, derde derman" it means that camel's milk is a remedy for all pains.
4. In ancient times in Turkmen Sahra there were camel palanquins used in wedding feasts (Fig. 1, 2 and 3). At present, they are used symbolically in traditional feasts to uphold the cultural heritage in weddings camels (Ghazi, 1998).
5. Camel is slaughtered during Eid ul-Adha, which is one of the most important religious feast for all Muslims specially Turkmen people (Fig 4). In Hanafi Sonni religion one camel will be slaughtered for a community of 7 people (Tengli, 1986).
6. Using picture of camels in Turkmen handcrafts namely carpet, rugs and needlings.



Fig. 1, 2 and 3. Camel palanquins in Turkmen Wedding

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Fig. 4. Preparing Camel to be Sacrificed in **Eid ul-Adha**

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## اهمیت اجتماعی و فرهنگی پرورش شتر در استان گلستان

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### چکیده:

پرورش و نگهداری شتر در این منطقه از دیرباز مرسوم بوده و شترازدام های اصلی ترکمنان بشمار میرفته، ولی امروزه به علت افزایش مشکلات پرورش و نگهداری آن محدود شده است. پرورش شتر در این منطقه گذشته از عوامل اقتصادی و اکولوژیکی، از نظر اجتماعی و فرهنگی نیز اهمیت خاصی داشته و پس از اسب دومین حیوانی است که ترکمن ها به آن علاقه خاصی دارند، به طوریکه نام یکی از طوایف و تیره های مهم ترکمنان دوجی یا دیه جی است که اصطلاحاً به کسانی اطلاق می شود که به حرفه پرورش شتر می پرداختند. همچنین در ایام قدیم در ترکمن صحرا در مراسم های عروسی نیز از کجاوه های شتر استفاده می شد و در حال حاضر هم به صورت مراسم فرهنگی و نمادین در برخی عروسی های منطقه انجام می شود. در این منطقه برای سنین، جنس ها و آمیخته های یک و دوکوهانه نسل اول و دوم شتر نام و اصطلاحات خاصی بکار برده می شود که نشان دهنده اهمیت فرهنگی پرورش شتر در منطقه می باشد. همچنین یکی از نقوش متداول قالی، قالیچه ها و سوزن دوزی ها، استفاده از طرح شتر است. شتر حیوانی مورد احترام در بین ترکمنها است و در ضرب المثل های آنها هم از شتر به نیکی یاد می شود. از جمله: (دویه مالینگ، دنیا مالینگ) یعنی اگر شتر داشته باشی، انگار دنیا را داری. (حاتاردا نر بولسه، یوک یرده قالماز) یعنی اگر در ردیف کاروان، شتر نر باشد، بار هیچ وقت روی زمین نمی ماند. (دویه چالی، درده درمان) یعنی دوغ شتر دواي دردهاست.

واژه های کلیدی: شتر یک کوهانه ترکمن، فرهنگ ترکمن